

October 23, 2020

DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC

FARA registration #6344

We must call for the full respect for the human right to freedom of religion or belief in line with relevant international human rights instruments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global pandemic should not justify the persecution of any individual or group, such as religious minorities or marginalized communities. Countries are still accountable for the obligations and commitments that have made to respect human rights.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has identified select countries where the governmental and/or societal response to COVID-19 has impacted religious freedom. Among other instances, the commission highlighted the impact on the Uighurs in China, the Shincheonji Church of Jesus in South Korea, and on the predominately Shi'a Qatif province in Saudi Arabia. We must urge these countries to take action to protect their respective minority religious groups.

The United States, along with other members of the International Religious Freedom Alliance, has pledged to "object and oppose, publicly and private, all abuses or violations of religious freedom." We must affirm what the US and the Alliance have stated with respect to religious minorities during the pandemic. Similarly, we must "call upon governments, elected and appointed officials, and religious leaders to avoid language that scapegoats certain religious and belief communities"; and we must "encourage governments to take proactive steps to ensure individuals in minority religious and belief communities are safe, protected, and receive health services in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner."

THE LIVINGSTON GROUP PROVIDES REPRESENTATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO ZION CHURCH, A CHURCH ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHINCHEONJI CHURCH OF JESUS. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.

October 23, 2020

DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC

FARA registration #6344

To-date, the USCIRF has condemned the scapegoating of the Shincheonji via twitter and in a press release and fact sheet (<https://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscirf-condemns-stigmatization-religious-minorities-during-covid-19>).

And the International Religious Freedom Alliance has issued a general statement on the treatment of religious minorities during COVID-19 (<https://www.state.gov/covid-19-and-religious-minorities-pandemic-statement/>).

THE LIVINGSTON GROUP PROVIDES REPRESENTATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO ZION CHURCH, A CHURCH ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHINCHEONJI CHURCH OF JESUS. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.

October 23, 2020

DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC

FARA registration #6344

In recognition of the Administration's steadfast commitment to protecting religious liberty and defending people of faith around the world, we urge consideration of the treatment of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus (Shincheonji) in South Korea during COVID-19.

As a newer and growing denomination, the Shincheonji has faced misrepresentation and discrimination by mainstream churches and the secular media. Church members report regular instances of hate speech, organized propaganda, forcible deprogramming, and extreme violence.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, persecution of the Shincheonji intensified. Early on, a church member inadvertently contributed to the spread of the virus in South Korea prior to an official lockdown. Subsequently, the South Korean authorities and public-at-large have unduly blamed the Shincheonji for the outbreak. Among other instances, authorities have downloaded all membership data, which includes US citizens; ordered forcible searches and seizures of facilities; launched a tax investigation; filed various lawsuits; and charged the founder with obstructing efforts to contain the pandemic. The Shincheonji are also facing a formal petition of dissolution filed with the office of the president.

The global pandemic should not justify the persecution of any individual or group, including a religious minority or marginalized community such as the Shincheonji. The United States, as should we, stands for the full respect of the human right to freedom of religion.

We thereby request the State Department continue to monitor the ongoing situation in South Korea, engage in outreach to the Shincheonji, and to dialogue, as appropriate, publically and privately with the authorities on the respect for religious liberty.

THE LIVINGSTON GROUP PROVIDES REPRESENTATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO ZION CHURCH, A CHURCH ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHINCHEONJI CHURCH OF JESUS. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.

October 23, 2020

DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC

FARA registration #6344

As the pandemic has spread throughout our country and worldwide, we are eagerly looking to treatments to help the millions of people who have been affected. This is a critical time in which we must unite in the fight against COVID-19.

U.S. members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus are working with the Red Cross offices in California to host large group blood and plasma donation drives. And, they are spearheading a food, clothing, and supply items drive for the families impacted by COVID-19 and the current fires. More than 4,000 survivors of COVID-19 from the church in Korea have volunteered to donate their plasma to advance treatment research, and 1,646 members have already successfully donated.

We send thanks for these life-saving and life-affirming donations. Their efforts in California and with the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) are significant. As seen in South Korea, success in curtailing COVID-19 is possible when public officials, healthcare professionals, citizens, and organizations come together.

We hope news of their good work will encourage others in the United States and around the world to donate and work together against this universal threat.

THE LIVINGSTON GROUP PROVIDES REPRESENTATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO ZION CHURCH, A CHURCH ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHINCHEONJI CHURCH OF JESUS. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.